

**CHILD PLACEMENT REVIEW BOARD
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
OPEN SESSION MINUTES
MARCH 10, 2017
SMYRNA STATE SERVICE CENTER
9:30 A.M-12:30 P.M**

Members Present: Neal Tash, Barbara Blair, Bob Hamilton, Joe Dell'Olio, Alexis Bryan-Dorsey, Cheryl Mitchell, Ruth Noriega, Rita Nelson

Members Absent: Judy Mellen, Bonnie Maul

Chair of Meeting: Neal Tash

Staff Present: Kecia Blackson, Sarah Bowers

Deputy Attorney General Present: Valerie Farnan

*****BEGIN OPEN SESSION AT 9:35 A.M*****

*****CLOSED SESSION BEGAN AT 9:41 A.M*****

I. PETITION CASES

*Discussions regarding petition cases are confidential and not open to the public.
Separate meeting minutes were prepared for the closed session.*

*****BEGIN OPEN SESSION AT 10:20 A.M*****

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JANUARY 13, 2017

- The minutes from the January 13, 2017 meeting were reviewed and approved. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes. The motion was approved unanimously.

III. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

A. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

- Kecia Blackson provided the Executive Committee with a Monthly Report hand-out, including graphs of Permanency Goals FY 2017; Placement Types FY 2017; and Barriers to Permanency FY 2017.
- Kecia reported the projected date for CPRB's new web-based system will be sometime in mid-March. Kecia noted, however, that the date keeps getting pushed back by the JIC Technical Support team. Kecia will provide an update in April.

- Kecia reported that because CPRB has experienced several issues with DFS not showing up at reviews, she thinks it would be a good idea for her and Neal Tash to meet again with the new Director of DFS, Carla Benson-Green.
- Cheryl Mitchell suggested one possible way to encourage DFS attendance would be by CPRB sending the Findings and Recommendations reports to the Court, noting that CPRB was unable to conduct a review due to DFS not participating. Kecia cautioned that this could back-fire on us and prompt various higher-ups to call into question the viability of CPRB conducting reviews.
- Neal suggested before he and Kecia meet with Carla Benson-Green that **the review coordinators start collecting data on which DFS worker does not show up for reviews, including the date of the review, panel/county, date invite letter was sent to DFS.** This way, CPRB has back-up documentation in the event Carla questions our allegations. Once a meeting has been scheduled with Carla, Kecia will again propose for CPRB to have access to FACTS (DFS's primary database). This would benefit not just us, but also DFS since they would no longer have to submit IP sheets. **UPDATE: This will be tabled until the Fall.**
- Joe Dell'Olio supports Neal's idea that it is critical to document who from DFS is not attending. Joe noted that by doing this, it may highlight a particular unit or county that is struggling with attendance issues.
- Alexis Bryan-Dorsey suggested one way to potentially improve DFS' attendance is by sending them an invite via Outlook Calendar. This way it automatically appears on their calendar and it is on our calendar as well. **UPDATE: After consideration, this has been deemed a tedious and time-consuming task for the Administrative Specialist I worker.**
- Rita Nelson suggested that once the meeting takes place between Neal, Kecia and Carla that Kecia send a follow-up summary letter/e-mail to Carla summarizing the topics and points of discussion. This way CPRB would have written documentation of not just the meeting, but the conversation highlights.

B. VOLUNTEER UPDATE

- Barbara Blair reported that one of the Panel members from New Castle 6, Carolyn Karney, has an excessive amount of absences (8 total), with only two being excused.
- Because Carolyn has been a long-time panel member (since 2001), **Barbara will call her to get more information about her absences before pursuing her resignation.**
- Barbara Blair reported attendance issues and how to handle them should be a part of the Presiding Officer training. It was noted by some members of the Executive Committee that they were never offered Presiding Officer Training.
- **Dana Thompson will work on conducting Presiding Officer Training sessions.**
- Neal Tash stated he wanted to send either a letter or some form of recognition to Mike Norton and Lisa Cookson, to thank them for their years of service.
- A motion was made and seconded that a Certificate of Appreciation is an appropriate form of appreciation to send to Mike. The motion was approved unanimously. The Executive Committee, however, agreed a letter or certificate is not appropriate in relation to Lisa, since she resigned of her own accord and letters/certificates were not sent to other previous staff members who had resigned.
- Kecia Blackson reported that CPRB review coordinators are having difficulty meeting quorum during reviews due to a lack of volunteers. She noted it is possible to hold a review without quorum, but if a case gets escalated to the Executive Committee and the Executive

Committee were to initiate advocacy efforts, the recommendations that were made and documented by CPRB would be considered null and void.

- Cheryl Mitchell offered her assistance, as presiding officer of Sussex 3, to reach out to volunteers in order to locate a sub(s) if a review coordinator is struggling to meet quorum for an upcoming review.
- **Sarah Bowers will send out to all presiding officers a contact list of volunteers to assist with a sub volunteer search.**
- Neal Tash noted that quorum is typically 50% plus one. However, he noted the Executive Committee needs to decide what figure is appropriate regarding the total number of volunteers to serve on review panels. It was agreed that eight is considered excessive.
- Valerie Farnan noted if the number of review panel members is not statutory, then it can be whatever number the board wants; however, she wants to read and review the statute to see if there is a specific number required by statute.
- **Valerie will send Neal Tash an e/mail regarding what, if any, statutory limits exist in relation to the number of review panel members.**

C. POLICY MANUAL UPDATES

- Kecia Blackson will provide updates to Sections IV and V of the Policy Manual. **Barbara Blair asked Kecia to please flag what items need updating in those sections by April's Executive Committee meeting.**
- **Neal Tash provided Sarah Bowers with his own updates to the Policy Manual. Sarah will work to get these updates completed by the April meeting.**

D. STRATEGIC PLAN

- Detailed discussion of the initial draft of Action Items has been tabled until the April meeting.

IV. COMMITTEES

- In Judy Mellen's absence, the Executive Committee reviewed the Marketing piece to the Annual Report that Judy had distributed via e/mail last month.
- **Sarah Bowers will make the updates to the Marketing piece and send out a revised copy to the appropriate parties by March 17th.**
- Joe Dell'Olio requested that when Neal Tash and Kecia Blackson meet with Carla Benson-Green, the new Director of DFS, to ask for an update on DFS using Skype during reviews. Joe noted that Shirley Roberts, the former DFS Director, told him that DFS would be able to take part in reviews via Skype as of April 2017. Is DFS still on-board with this?

Action Items

- Kecia will determine if attendance records for members of the Executive Committee are maintained.
- Neal and Kecia will meet with the new DFS Director, Carla Benson-Green, to discuss a solution to DFS no-shows at reviews. First, Neal wants the review coordinators to start collecting data on which DFS worker does not show up for reviews, including the date of the review, panel/county, date invite letter sent to DFS. Neal also wants CPRB to start sending review invites to DFS via Outlook Calendar. **UPDATE: Completed and ongoing. Beech Street has been identified as the DFS unit with the attendance issues. And the Admin. Specialist I will not be sending invites to DFS via Outlook due to impracticality. We will continue to send DFS invites via e/mail.**
- Valerie will send Neal an e/mail regarding what, if any, statutory limits exist in relation to the number of review panel members.
- Dana Thompson will work on conducting Presiding Officer Training sessions.
- Sarah Bowers will send out to all presiding officers a contact list of volunteers to assist with a sub volunteer search. **UPDATE: Completed as of 3/17/17**
- Kecia will review Section IV of the Policy Manual with CPRB staff prior to the Executive Committee meeting to identify any necessary changes to that section.
- Kecia will update the CPRB Policy Manual regarding Sections IV and V.
- Sarah will add to April's Agenda Policy Manual updates to Sections IV (Staff) and V (Conducting Independent Reviews). **UPDATE: Sarah added this to April's Agenda.**
- Neal Tash provided Sarah Bowers with his own updates to the Policy Manual. Sarah will work to get these updates completed by the April meeting. **UPDATE: Sarah completed Neal's updates on 3/16/17 and will provide Neal and Barbara with updated copies of the Policy Manual.**
- Kecia will follow-up with Ray Lewis, of Boards & Commissions, to get a status update of potential volunteers in the queue and report back to the Executive Committee at a later date. **UPDATE: Kecia sent Ray an e/mail on 3/17/17, and copied Bonnie Maull. Currently waiting on his response.**
- Sarah will set up an account with Volunteer Match in January 2017.

- Sarah will order business cards for any Executive Committee member who requests an order. **ONGOING**
- Barbara will call Carolyn Karney to get more information about her excessive absences from New Castle 6 review meetings, and determine if resignation is appropriate. **UPDATE: Barbara called Carolyn on 3/10/17 and was informed she has had a series of serious health problem that has prevented her from attending reviews. She didn't realize her absences were causing an issue. She will submit her resignation this month. Carolyn submitted her resignation on 3/21/17.**
- Kecia will send to Barbara the Strategic Plan outline before the next Executive Committee meeting. **UPDATE: Kecia sent to Barbara the Strategic Plan template**
- Executive Committee to finish and distribute the Strategic Plan.
- Cheryl will Chair a 2-3 person sub-committee to identify ways to enhance Annual Meeting attendance. **UPDATE NEEDED**
- Joe will monitor progress on using Skype for our reviews. **UPDATE: Kecia and Neal will address with Carla at their next meeting.**
- Joe recommended the new DFS Director, Carla Benson-Green, attend one of our Executive Committee meetings in 2017. (Note: Carla starts as Director in March). **UPDATE: Kecia sent Carla an e/mail on 3/17/17 inviting her to attend a future Executive Committee meeting. We are awaiting her response.**
- Joe will facilitate a proposal to establish a CPRB Scholarship Foundation.
- Kecia will create a mechanism to collect data about retention and graduation rates for our Scholarship recipients.
- Kecia will develop a formal process regarding criteria and expectations for Scholarship applicants, including financial need.
- Kecia will develop a series of Webinars for new panel members to view prior to basic training.
- Kecia will develop a training schedule for CPRB staff.
- Kecia will develop a system to track volunteer training and absenteeism. **UPDATE: Kecia delegated this to Dana and the Review Coordinators.**
- Kecia will reach out to DFS regarding timely Interested Parties submissions to ensure the 30-day schedule can go out on time. **UPDATE: Kecia delegated to Dana and Bernadette. Completed and ongoing.**

- Kecia is working on a CPRB newsletter to promote our advocacy efforts, training opportunities, and highlight the good work our volunteers and staff are doing.
- Kecia will work with Carla Benson-Green, Deborah Flad and Tom Mraz to have DFS data directly populate into our server on a weekly basis. This extends to working with DFS about obtaining outcomes for kids in care. **UPDATE: Ongoing. DFS is not able to work with CPRB at this time due to the transition of their system to FOCUS. Note that Dale Matthews, Deputy Court Administrator at JIC, informed Kecia this initiative would first have to be analyzed before assigning any priority or timeline. This has been tabled until the Fall once DFS' transition to FOCUS is complete.**
- Kecia will include the Executive Director's Monthly Report along with the Executive Committee monthly mailing prior to the next Executive Committee. **UPDATE: ONGOING.**

****THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 12:10 P.M. ****

*THE NEXT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING WILL BE AT THE
SMYRNA STATE SERVICE CENTER
ON APRIL 7, 2017*